NEW DATA ON *LERISTA INGRAMI*, A RARE SKINK FROM SOUTHERN CAPE YORK PENINSULA, AUSTRALIA. *Memoirs of the Queensland Museum 42(1): 24. 1997:-* *Lerista ingrami* Storr, 1991 is poorly known. It is treated as 'rare' (McDonald et al., 1991) and was known, prior to Sept., 1996, from 10 specimens (the holotype and nine paratypes) from what amounts to a single locality — the foredune of the beach between the mouth of the McIvor R. and Cape Flattery, on southern Cape York Peninsula. *L. ingrami* is one of a few species of Australian skinks (4/320 species) not photographed in life. The type locality of this species has been visited recently (13 Sept., 1996). As a result, we can clarify some minor discrepancies with collection data of the type specimens; present photographs of a live specimen of *L. ingrami* and of its type locality; describe the colour of *L. ingrami* in life; and comment on prey of *L. ingrami*.

Published data on the type locality and the collection locality of the paratypes of *L. ingrami* is at variance slightly with information recorded in the Queensland Museum register. Storr (1991) records:

'Holotype J32396 in Queensland Museum collected on 27 July 1976 by G.J. Ingram near beach north of McIver River, Queensland, in 15°07'S, 145°15'E'.

'Paratypes Queensland: 7km N of mouth of McIver River (QM20644-51) and 5km N (QM20653)'.

The QM register entries for these specimens are:

'QMJ32396 (holotype) on mission road near beach, north of McIvor R., 13 July, 1976, G.J. Ingram'. (Date of registration and entry 27 July, 1976).

'QMJ20644-51 (paratypes) approx. 4m N of McIvor R. mouth Cooktown 1:250000 328089, 20 Nov., 1970, JAC, T.P. Tebble, C. Tanner; 'buried in sand under log on first dune'.

'QMJ20653 (paratype) approx. 3m N of McIvor R. mouth, Cooktown 1:250000 318090, 20 Nov., 1970, JAC, T.P. Tebble, C. Tanner; 'buried in sand of first dune - under logs'. (Date of registration and entry 6 Jan., 1971).

For the last-mentioned, sometime in or about 1986, latitude/longitude were calculated from an atlas and added to the register in pencil, 15°05'S 145°14'E.

Following advice from G.J. Ingram (collector of the holotype of *L. ingrami*) and using a 'Magellan Global Positioning System (GPS)', we have calculated the type locality for *L. ingrami* (Fig. 1) at 15°07'01"S 145°14'42"E, very close to the locality calculated for/by Storr (but not entered in the QM register) at the time of his description of the species - 15°07' 145°15'.

We collected topotypic specimens QMJ62430-1, QMJ62443. One has been photographed (Fig. 2). All were found in the middle of the day, 'at rest', on slightly moist sand under dead coconuts. Once disturbed, they invariably sought escape into the sand. Both mid-body (20 x3) and supraciliary

FIG. 1. The type locality of *Lerista ingrami* Storr, 1991. (Photograph, JAC).

FIG. 2. *Lerista ingrami*. (Photograph, Jeff Wright, QM).

counts (5x2, 4x1) for these specimens fall within the range given for the species by Storr (1991).

L. ingrami was described from old (15-21 years) spirit material, so its colour in life was not known. Storr's description (1991) can be augmented: body upper surface a shiny pink or grey-beige, profusely marked by tiny dark brown dots; head scales dark-edged. A sharp-edged dark brown lateral stripe runs from the rostral to the base of the tail, tapering posteriorly. Upper surfaces of limbs the same colour as dorsum, also with dark brown (minute) dots. Venter (SV) pale grey-white. Tail pale to very bright orange ventrally and dorsally.

There is little information on the prey of *Lerista* spp. Wilson & Knowles (1988) report "... *Small arthropods, their eggs and larvae probably constitute the bulk of their diets ...*" *L. bipes* and *L. muelleri* are the only species from sandy localities for which prey have been reported, and there is only one other reference to prey of *Lerista* (a Tasmanian record of Hewer & Mollison, 1974). Smith (1976) records orthopterans from *L. bipes*, and proturans and collembolans from *L. muelleri*. Faecal pellets from the recently-collected *L. ingrami* have been examined by Dr G. Monteith, Senior Curator (Entomology) at the Queensland Museum. They contain remains of two small scorpions (Arachnida: Scorpionida) and two small seed bugs (Insecta: Lygaeidae). Both, he advises, are common and active amongst leaf litter.

Tissue samples were taken from QMJ62430 and QMJ62431 and sent to the tissue library of the South Australian Museum, Adelaide. Only minor external morphological characters (e.g., mid-body scales, lamellae of the third toe, supraciliary scales and colour) separate *L. ingrami* from *L. orientalis* (De Vis, 1889) and *L. zonulata* Storr, 1991.

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